Faculty Evaluation Guidelines
School of Population Health

1. Introduction

    The goal of the evaluation process is to ensure adequate and sustained professional development and achievement, which we aim to achieve by promoting faculty accountability within a community of routine peer review and constructive feedback.

    These guidelines are meant to assist faculty and chairs in participating in the evaluation process. They are meant to be read in conjunction with the School of Population Health (SOPH) Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures document, as well as the VCU Annual Assessment of Faculty Performance and the VCU Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy documents. Because of the information contained in these other sources, these guidelines will not be exhaustive, but instead will refer to those original sources as appropriate.

    In large part, Departments are responsible for developing their own process for conducting faculty evaluations, provided they are consistent with the policy documents listed above as well as these guidelines.

2. Annual Faculty Evaluation Process

    The following language is taken from Section 3.4 of the SOPH Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures Document:

    > All tenured, *tenure-eligible*, and term (non-tenure) faculty shall be evaluated annually using criteria established in the guidelines of the school and/or department. Faculty with term (non-tenure) appointments also shall be evaluated annually using the guidelines of the school and/or department, but taking into consideration the special duties assigned to the individual faculty member's term (non-tenure) appointment. The guidelines for all evaluations shall be consistent with and fully incorporate the guidelines in the Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy.

    > *Each Department is responsible for establishing explicit guidelines for the process of conducting faculty review. These guidelines, which form part of the Department's Promotion and Tenure Guidelines, will include the timing of such reviews, the selection and responsibilities of those conducting the review, the criteria by which the faculty assessments will be made, and the manner in which findings and assessments will be communicated to the faculty member. The Department Chair is responsible for ensuring these guidelines are provided to all faculty members and that reviews are conducted according to the departmental guidelines for each faculty member in the department, and also that they are conducted according to these SOPH guidelines.*

    General Timeline and Process

    Self-evaluations – as well as the supervisor and chair evaluations – are made in the Portfolio software system. Please visit the Portfolio Help and Training page or the Portfolio Six-Step Guide page for assistance.

- May 1 – June 30: Faculty to complete their self-evaluation covering all activities from the most recent academic year, which falls between July 1 of the previous year through June 30 of the current year. Please consult either the [illustrated guide](#) or [video](#) for adding activities. Once all activities are entered, an activity report (to be submitted with self-evaluation) should be created; please consult the [illustrated guide](#) or [video](#) for assistance.
- June 30: Faculty self-evaluations are due; please consult the [illustrated guide](#) or [video](#) for assistance. The self-evaluation includes your written assessment (space for this is incorporated into the Portfolio website), your activity report (see above), as well as the completion of your Annual Activity Score worksheet (which should be emailed separately to your Supervisor and/or Department Chari).
- July 31: Supervisor evaluations are due. Note that in most instances, the Chair is also the supervisor. In cases where faculty member has supervisors in addition to the Chair (ex. faculty holding administrative roles in a Center, or who are entirely funded by a grant), there is the opportunity to elicit formal feedback and an evaluation from that primary supervisor.
- August 31: Chair evaluations are due. Meetings between Chairs and faculty to discuss the faculty self-assessment before writing the Chair evaluation are strongly recommended. Goals for the subsequent evaluation period (and for the future in general) should be set with the faculty member and delivered as part of the Chair evaluation or in a follow-up meeting.

3. Self, Supervisor and Chair Rankings

Each faculty member is tasked with ranking their performance (in areas of research, teaching and mentoring, service, and overall) as Needs Improvement, Satisfactory, Very Good, or Excellent. These assessments should be made commensurate with career stage and responsibility distribution, and should also be made with respect to Departmental standards and expectations. Note that we make a distinction between early-stage faculty (defined here as faculty within the first three years of initial employment, who were not previously employed as instructor or faculty at another institution) and established faculty (defined here as faculty beyond the first three years). Note that for this document, we do not distinguish between established faculty at the assistant, associate and professor levels.

Needs Improvement: this ranking is appropriate in situations where efforts are not given or where they are executed poorly. For teaching and mentoring, this could include teaching fewer courses then required by effort, refusing to teach courses, poor mentoring of students or trainees, or having generally negative or low evaluations. For research, this could include not submitting Grant proposals or manuscripts for Review, as well as instances of research malpractice or ethical violations. For service, this could include refusal to serve on committees, or contributing to negative or hostile committee environments. Any faculty receiving a "Needs Improvement" assessment – either overall or in part – are required to create a performance improvement plan with their Department Chair.

Satisfactory: this ranking is appropriate in situations where efforts are taken, but results are indeterminant or forthcoming, or where they are evaluated in a mixed to lukewarm manner. For teaching and mentoring, this could include teaching an appropriate number of courses with mixed evaluations. For research, this could imply that grant proposals and papers are being submitted, but are not well evaluated or are rejected. For service, this could imply that service is provided but without distinction. For early stage faculty, submitting proposals and papers for peer review, but without acceptance is often viewed as very good. Any faculty receiving a "Satisfactory" assessment – either overall or in part – are required to create a performance improvement plan with their Department Chair.

Very Good: this ranking is appropriate for achievement commensurate with expectations amongst the general faculty. For teaching and mentoring this could include teaching an appropriate number of courses with evaluations that are overwhelmingly positive. For research, this could include accepted Grant proposals or peer reviewed manuscripts in amounts or frequencies commonly observed among department faculty, and at or near expectations from the SOPH and Department. For service this could include positive contributions and efforts to the committee, department or school.

Excellent: this ranking is appropriate for achievement above and beyond the general expectation. For teaching and mentoring, this could include evaluations that are uniformly high and glowing, teaching more courses or mentoring more students than expected, or providing innovations that demonstrably improve instruction or the learning environment. For research this could include high frequencies or amounts of grant funding or peer reviewed manuscripts, as well as high quality achievements, such as P- or U-level awards, or high-impact publications, and above expectations from the SOPH and Department. For service this could include providing more or better-quality service than expected or providing leadership or innovative solutions that directly lead to an improved environment.

4. Potentially Ambiguous Activities

The following listed items are those with potential for ambiguous assignment within the domains of research, teaching and mentoring, and service. The guidance that follows are intended to help faculty, supervisors and chairs place activities in the most appropriate domains in as unambiguous a manner as possible, understanding that some activities will prohibit such clean classification.

- Grant Study Section Service (as Member or Chair): This counts as *Service to the Profession* and should be captured as an activity under the *Administration and Service* domain. In addition, the membership (as full or ad hoc member, or as chair) itself counts as national recognition as a researcher, and can be described under the written narrative of the *Research* domain. All effort points should be placed with the *Administration and Service* domain.

- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL): Most peer-reviewed accomplishments, such as an awarded grant or peer-reviewed manuscript, should be captured as activities under the *Research* domain. Other accomplishments, such as the creation of educational tools or publication of non-peer reviewed documents, count as teaching innovations and should be captured as activities under the *Teaching / Mentoring* domain. All accomplishments and activities should be detailed under the written narrative of the *Teaching / Mentoring* domain. All effort points should be placed with the *Teaching / Mentoring* domain.

- Seminar Series / Guest Lectures: These types of non-course-based teaching events should be captured as activities under the *Teaching / Mentoring* domain. Depending upon the nature of the lecture / seminar content – for instance, in an invited lecture or guest lecture for a professional research organization – this may also be described under the written narrative of the *Research* domain. All effort points should be placed with the *Teaching / Mentoring* domain.

- Administrative Positions: Most administrative positions (ex. Graduate Program Director, Assistant or Associate Dean) are captured as activities in the *Administration and Service* domain. Likewise, most accomplishments and achievements (number of faculty and staff hired; programs or initiatives created / completed; number of participants in a program; etc.) should be described under the written narrative of the *Administration and Service* domain. All effort points should be placed with the *Administration and Service* domain.

    - One exception is that of Director of a research Center, Institute or shared resource, which, along with all accompanying accomplishments and achievements, should be captured predominantly as activities in the *Research* domain, while purely administrative efforts can be captured as activities and described in the written narrative of the *Administration and Service* domain. All effort points should be placed with the *Research* domain.